

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Cancelled).
2. (Currently Amended) A method of bonding metal plates according to Claim [1] 50, wherein the inclination angle of the bonded portion of bonded surface is 75° or less.
3. - 49. (Cancelled).
50. (New) A method of bonding metal plates at an overlapped portion, comprising steps of:
 - applying an upper shearing blade assembly comprising a first shearing blade and a clamp adjoining the first shearing blade onto one side of an overlapped portion;
 - applying a lower shearing blade assembly comprising a second shearing blade and a clamp adjoining the second shearing blade,

wherein the overlapped portion is sandwiched by the upper and lower shearing blade assemblies during shearing of the metal plates by moving said first and second shearing blades under a clamp supporting force, and

wherein at least one of the upper and lower shearing blade assemblies is disposed as to impart the clamp supporting force to the overlapped portion in the direction inclined with respect to the thickness direction of the plates; and

bonding a sheared portion of the plates by the deformation of each sheared surface under the clamp supporting force thereby to form a bonding face between the plates in a direction inclined with respect to a thickness direction.

51. (New) A method of bonding metal plates according to claim 1, wherein the upper and lower shearing blade assemblies are moved in opposing directions.

52. (New) A method of bonding metal plates according to claim 50, wherein both of the upper and lower shearing blade assemblies is so disposed as to impart the clamping supporting force to the overlapped portion in the direction inclined with respect to the thickness direction of the plates.